

REAL ESTATE GUIDE

First-Time Homebuyer Guide



Miguel Sepulveda

REALTOR® • DRE #02180879

FIFTY HILLS REAL ESTATE

(925) 428-8128

Miguelseprealstate@gmail.com

Sepulvedarealestate.net



What to expect on your path to homeownership



Get financially ready

Check credit, save for down payment, and calculate budget.



Understand local market **02**

Learn about the cities you ideally want to live in



Get pre-approved **03**

Secure a letter from a trusted lender to prove buying power.



Partner with your agent **04**

Consult on strategy and start your customized home search.



Tour homes & refine **05**

Visit properties, refine criteria, and find "the one".



Make a competitive offer **06**

Submit a strong contract with terms that win.



Inspect & negotiate **07**

Verify condition, review appraisal, and negotiate repairs.



Close escrow **08**

Sign final docs, fund the loan, and receive your keys!



Move in! **09**

Settle in and protect your investment for the future.

Get financially ready



Plan & Budget

Before looking at homes, define your comfort zone:

- ✓ **Define a comfortable monthly payment:** Include principal, interest, taxes, insurance, HOA fees, and potential Mello-Roos assessments.
- ✓ **Manage Debt-to-Income (DTI):** Keep your recurring monthly debts within lender guidelines (typically aiming for <50% total DTI).
- ✓ **Protect your credit score:** Continue paying bills on time. Avoid opening new credit cards or making large purchases (like a car) during this process.



Savings & Programs

Strategic saving and assistance options:

- ✓ **Estimate cash to close:** Down payment + closing costs + reserve funds for emergencies.
- ✓ **Explore assistance programs:** Look into CalHFA, GSFA, and local city/county first-time buyer programs in your area.
- ✓ **Automate your savings:** Set up automatic transfers to a dedicated high-yield savings account to build your fund effortlessly. (optional)



Pro Tip

Don't move money around between accounts excessively before applying. Lenders will need to source all large deposits.

Understanding the local market

Pittsburg



HIGHLIGHTS

- eBART access (Pittsburg Center)
- Waterfront & Marina areas
- Mix of established & newer homes
- Strong value proposition

Antioch



HIGHLIGHTS

- Broad single-family inventory
- Hillcrest eBART station access
- Many solar/PPA homes (review terms)
- Diverse neighborhoods

Concord



HIGHLIGHTS

- Closest to major job centers
- Classic ranch homes & condos
- Highly competitive market
- Vibrant downtown plaza

Bay Point



HIGHLIGHTS

- Entry-level pricing opportunities
- Quick BART access via Pittsburg/BP
- Commuter friendly location
- Growing community investment

PLEASANT HILL



HIGHLIGHTS

- Outstanding outdoor lifestyle
- Popular school districts
- Exceptional Family Friendly Community
- Hwy 4 Bypass commute considerations

Smart Search



TOOLS & TIMING

- ✓ **Seasonality:** Spring is active; get pre-approved early for speed.
- ✓ **Tools:** Real-time new home alerts & "Coming Soon" status from Miguel

Loan types & assistance programs



Conventional

DOWN PAYMENT
As low as 3%

MORTGAGE INSURANCE
PMI required if <20% down; cancelable once equity reached.

BEST FOR
Buyers with strong credit (620+) seeking flexible terms.



FHA

DOWN PAYMENT
3.5% Minimum

MORTGAGE INSURANCE
MIP required for life of loan in most cases (unless refinanced).

BEST FOR
Buyers with lower credit scores or higher debt-to-income.



VA

DOWN PAYMENT
\$0 Down Payment

MORTGAGE INSURANCE
No PMI. A one-time Funding Fee applies (can be financed).

BEST FOR
Eligible veterans and active-duty service members.



USDA

DOWN PAYMENT
\$0 Down Payment

REQUIREMENTS
Strict property location (rural/semi-rural) and income limits.

BEST FOR
Buyers looking in eligible rural areas with qualifying income.

BONUS

California Assistance Programs

CalHFA

Offers deferred-payment junior loans for down payment and closing costs.

*Subject to income limits.

GSFA Platinum

Provides down payment assistance grants (non-repayable) or second mortgages.

*Available for various professions.

Gift Funds

Most loan types allow family members to "gift" funds for your down payment.

*Proper documentation required.

Mortgage pre-approval: Your buying power



Compare Lenders

01

Look for reputation, responsiveness. Ask for our local recommendations.



Income Documents

02

Gather your last 2 years of W-2s or 1099s, plus recent pay stubs covering the last 30 days.



Asset Documents

03

Prepare the last 2 months of bank statements (all pages) and 2 years of tax returns to verify funds.



Strong Pre-Approval

04

Request a "desktop underwrite" or full credit pull. This carries more weight than a simple pre-qualification.



Understand Terms

05

Know the difference between interest rate and points, fees, and rate-lock options.



Strategic Options

06

Ask about seller credits for closing costs or rate buy-downs. Using gift funds? Get a gift letter ready if needed.

How we'll work together



Your Agent's Role

My commitment to your success:

- ✓ **Strategic Consultation:** We'll align your goals, budget, and timeline to create a customized roadmap for your home search.
- ✓ **Market Expertise:** Providing deep neighborhood insights and access to both MLS listings and potential off-market opportunities.
- ✓ **Professional Network:** Direct access to my trusted team of vendors: vetted lenders, inspectors, escrow officers, and contractors.
- ✓ **Process Management:** I handle tour scheduling, review disclosures, and craft the negotiation strategy to protect your interests.



What You Can Expect

A smooth, transparent experience:

- ✓ **Communication & Speed:** Fast response times and clear updates via your preferred method (text, email, call).
- ✓ **Real-Time Alerts:** Immediate notifications for new listings that match your specific criteria so we act fast.
- ✓ **Data-Driven Guidance:** Honest pricing feedback based on transparent comparable sales data, not guesswork.
- ✓ **Modern Convenience:** Digital signing tools (E-sign) and organized deadline management to keep the process moving efficiently.



Communication is Key

If your needs or timeline change, let me know immediately so I can adjust our strategy to serve you better.

Smart house-hunting strategy

 **01**

Prioritize Needs

Clearly define must-haves vs. nice-to-haves: beds, baths, commute, schools, and yard size.

 **02**

Scout Areas

Preview neighborhoods at different times of day to gauge traffic, noise levels, and activity.

 **03**

Tour Wisely

Use private showings for serious contenders and open houses to get a feel for the broader market.

 **04**

Evaluate Condition

Look beyond staging: check roof age, windows, foundation, drainage, and major systems.

 **05**

Hidden Costs

Note recurring costs like HOA fees, Mello-Roos taxes, and solar lease or PPA terms.

 **06**

Document & Rank

Bring a tape measure, take detailed photos/notes, and rank homes immediately after touring.

 **07**

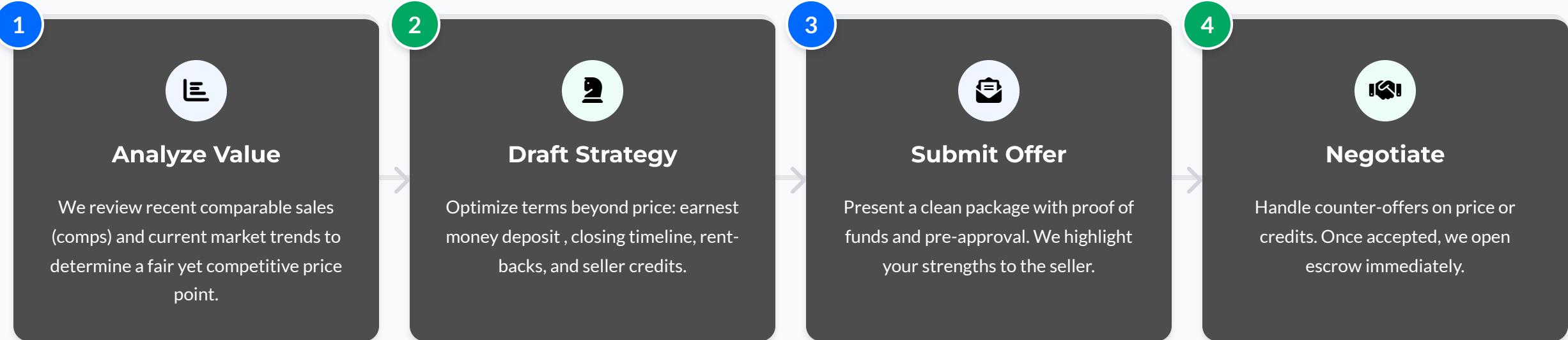
Objective Decisions

Focus on property facts to ensure fair housing. We rely on objective data sources.

 **Pro Tip**

Don't rush the process. The right home is worth waiting for!

Making a competitive offer



Contingencies: Your Safety Net

Typically include Inspection, Appraisal, and Loan contingencies. Shortening these timelines can make your offer stronger, but we must balance risk.



Fair Housing Compliance

We focus strictly on the property facts and your financial strength.



Inspections & Appraisal



Physical Inspections

Verify the condition of the home:

- ✓ **Recommended types:** General home, pest/termite, roof, and specialized inspections (sewer lateral, chimney, pool/spa) as needed.
- ✓ **Review disclosures:** Compare seller disclosures with your inspection reports to find discrepancies.
- ✓ **Prioritize findings:** Focus on health, safety, and major systems (HVAC, foundation). Don't sweat the cosmetic small stuff.



Appraisal & Negotiation

Managing value and repair requests:

- ✓ **Appraisal results:** If value meets price, proceed. If low: renegotiate price, ask for seller credit, or bridge the gap with cash.
- ✓ **Request for repairs:** Based on inspection findings, we can ask for repairs, a price reduction, or a credit towards closing costs.
- ✓ **Strategic solutions:** We'll craft a negotiation strategy that protects your wallet without losing the home.



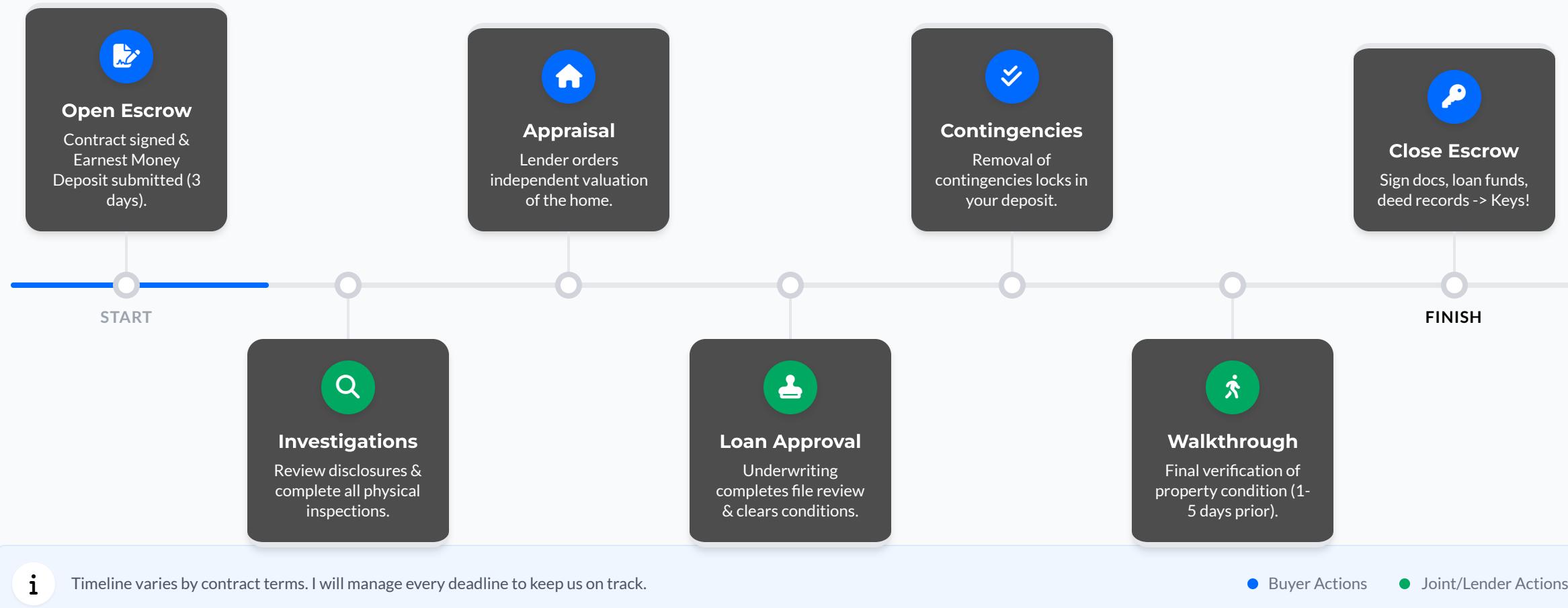
Pro Tip

Inspections are for discovery. No home is perfect—even new construction. Focus negotiations on "deal-breakers," not maintenance.

STEP 08 - CLOSING PROCESS

From contract to keys

⌚ Typical Timeline: 21-30 Days



After closing + next steps



Welcome Home



New Homeowner Checklist

ESSENTIALS & UTILITIES

Set up utilities immediately

Transfer electric/gas (PG&E), water, garbage, and internet service into your name.

Update address & forward mail

Notify USPS, banks, insurance, employer, and update your DMV records.

TAXES & OWNERSHIP

Watch for Supplemental Tax Bill

Expect a separate bill for the difference between the old and new tax value in year one.

MAINTENANCE & SAFETY

Safety upgrades & plan

Change locks, reset garage codes, check smoke detectors, and review HOA CC&Rs.

Let's get you home.

Your journey to homeownership starts with a conversation.

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